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### October 26, 2013: In God We Trust in the Public Schools

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Title: In God We Trust in the Public Schools

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10/26/2013—Bobby Kerlik wrote a story in the Tribune Review last Thursday about the effort by Representative Rick Saccone to pass a Pennsylvania statute requiring school districts to post the national motto, In God We Trust, in every public school. The constitutional issue is probably a close one, as are all constitutional issues concerning religion in the public square, because of the close division in the United States Supreme Court. The national motto is obviously not unconstitutional in many contexts but may be unconstitutional in public schools. The article illustrates the bizarre and dishonest quality of debate over these issues. Because of the current state of establishment clause jurisprudence, Saccone is forced to claim, dishonestly, that religion has nothing to do with it, as Kerlik quoted him. It's about history. But, of course, an ordinary person quoted in the story, Elizabeth Forward, supported the idea because it would remind people to put our trust in God. And this, probably unconstitutional, motive is undoubtedly in Saccone's mind as well. Today's jurisprudence encourages public officials to lie in this way. This sort of public bad faith is one of the reasons for my proposal in the book, *Church, State, And the Crisis in American Secularism*. I propose there that God language, like that in the national motto, be reinterpreted along the lines of higher law. Thus, In God We Trust, becomes, in addition to its sectarian meaning, an encouragement to trust in reality. Understood in this way, its presence in public schools would be unremarkable.